

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY, 1989

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FSA Executive 1988/89

President	Kevin Busswood	436/313
First Faculty Vice-President	Tom Davis	296
Second Faculty Vice-President ...	Doug Hudson	325
First Staff Vice-President	Richard Heyman	333
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Treasurer	Cheryl Issac	262
Recording Secretary	Jocelyn Cass	318
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Executive Meeting Schedule

Abbotsford, Room A307, 3:30 p.m. (Week 3)

March 14 (instead of March 15)
April 12
May 10
June 7

(and such other meetings as may be necessary)

FSA NEWSLETTER

February, 1989

From the Editor . . .

I. THE SATANIC LYRICS

My friend Ted phoned the other night, chuckling over a report that radio station WNEW-FM had offered free copies of The Satanic Verses to the first 102 listeners who mailed in a record by Cat Stevens. Stevens, a former Greek, has been born again (again) as one Yusuf Islam, and come out in favour of the Ayatollah's infamous death sentence against Salman Rushdie.

Ted said he had taken his Cat Stevens records out in the back alley and driven over them repeatedly with his truck. It turned out he was just kidding, but I thought, well, I will take my Cat Stevens records out and drive over them repeatedly with my car. I will take the worst-mutilated one, put it up on the bulletin board outside my office, and let the passersby put that in their pipes.

Damn, though. I had been fond of those records once. Or at least some of them. Maybe it would suffice, as a gesture, to demolish only one. How about Catch Bull at Four, which I had never really liked all that much anyway? But Jeez, what kind of equivocation would that be? So I settled on Teaser and the Firecat, though it did occur to me that if everybody was doing this, here I was about to destroy a bona fide collectors' item.

Driving repeatedly over Teaser and the Firecat did not have the desired effect. For one thing, I kept missing it. And then, when I tried to position my

front wheel over it and gun it into the dirt, I put more of a rut in my driveway than I did in the record. Ultimately, I got a lot of mud on the cover, and managed to erase most of the lyrics to "Changes IV": "Don't you feel a change a coming / From another side of time" The rest is history, so far as this copy of the record jacket happens to be concerned.

History. God. 1970.

So now what? I thought of burning it (partly; don't forget, it had to remain a recognizable objet d'art for my bulletin board). Or melting it. If the Ayatollah was going to burn Rushdie's book, why shouldn't I melt Cat Stevens's record? Imagine the precedent! Wholesale record meltings throughout the Fraser Valley!

I was on the point of driving an axe through the damn thing when it came to me that I wasn't really any better than the people all this was supposed to be against, except for the fact that I didn't want to see Cat Stevens dead and I didn't really care how many other people listened to his records as long as I got a chance to kick the shit out of mine.

And so, the basic intellectual's instinct has won out again, as I transmute the base metal of direct action into the tinfoil of yet another exercise in the word-processor-is-mightier-than-the-splitting-maul. I'll have to settle for giving the dog a

whack or banging my own head against the wall, along with several hundred million other fundamentally decent souls, at our wits' end over what to do about the world's burgeoning population of fundamentally ... indecent ... well ... fundamentalists. To wit, human beings who have consented to having their brains removed and replaced with one-celled organisms whose sole purpose in life is to utter the phrase yes sir.

So what, finally, do I do about Cat Stevens? I know! Revisionist criticism! How easy

it is in angry hindsight to notice a brainless escapism in the silly bugger's lyrics:

Now I've been crying lately
thinking about the world as
it is
why must we go on hating
why can't we live in bliss
cause out on the edge of
darkness
there rides a peace train ...

Sure, Cat.

And what train pulled up after that one rolled by?

II. THE SATANIC CONDOMS

In the matter of the Great Condom Caper, conventional wisdom would seem to have it that student Andy Thompson was a very naughty boy for 'setting up' President Peter Jones with that phone call to The Province. And the article, with its lurid headline DANCE CONDOMS OUTLAWED, certainly did cause unseemly speculation as to the dimensions and purpose of a 'dance condom', including jokes about ardent Mennonites having developed a full-body variation on the standard model.

Andy freely confessed to me that he had phoned The Province, but only after a reporter from the Valley Times had already got the story from Joe Fulgham (whose idea the whole thing had been in the first place). Andy also confessed that the purpose behind handing out condoms (a rampant practice in the more cosmopolitan post-secondary institutions to the west of us) was to dispel the anxiety and discomfort a college-age person can feel when talking about condoms, let alone holding one

in his (or her) hand. He appeared to me to be taking AIDS perfectly seriously, and I will confess that when Andy talked of the gulf that yawns between reading a pamphlet on AIDS or birth control and actually having the presence of mind to roll on a safe when you're about to make love with someone you don't absolutely know, it struck a few chords in my own experience.

The response of the Student Society power brokers was highly instructive. A highly-placed informant (Dean Close) told me that the official Inter-Campus Council consists of ten members drawn from the three campus councils, yet when I talked with President Soheili and Vice-President Arend, they made it perfectly clear that the real decision-making authority was vested in the five persons of the "inner executive", an entity which Dean Close described as "a fiction". I will not recount the terms in which Soheili and Arend described the function of a Member at Large (which is Andy

Thompson's position on the Chilliwack council), but they made no bones about the haste with which they had conducted the vote that distanced them so antiseptically from the emerging scandal. Fulgham somehow being unreachable that day, the (telephone) vote was still unanimous: 4-0.

Peter took the position that his interdict against condoms was "a matter not of morals but of taste", but this struck me even at the time as an odd sort of evasion. I am not at all sure that a college president should ban things simply because he finds them (or thinks the local version of "community standards" would find them) in bad taste,

though there should be no question of his taking a stand where a genuine moral matter is concerned. I think it was Lord Shaftesbury who said that "bad taste leads to crime", and I am even willing to admit that a fortuitous condom in the wallet can lead to an unpremeditated screw in the back seat of the car. But squeamishness about sexual knowledge is the AIDS epidemic's best friend, and in the present case, good taste can perpetrate an ignorance that we can no longer afford, and indeed never could. As a colleague put it in the hallway the other day, "Condoms at a dance may be tasteless, but AIDS is the ultimate in tastelessness."

III. THE SATANIC SCHOOL BOARDS

At the time of writing, Abbotsford, Chilliwack, and Agassiz-Harrison teachers are on strike, and Langley teachers are on rotating job action and under threat of lockout. In Abbotsford and Langley the central issue is "union membership", with the unions attempting to negotiate the obvious consequence of votes to go union (which passed in all 75 of the province's school districts), and the school boards trying to engineer an 'open shop', which, in the absence of employee-manned hiring committees such as we enjoy at FVC, means no shop at all.

Socred MLA (and caucus chairman) Carol Gran has had the effrontery to stick her nose into the Langley situation, urging the board to stand firm against the leftist hordes, and Abbotsford trustees have spent freely on full-page advertisements in the ASM News to sway public opinion

away from the teachers. The Abbotsford D.T.A. has even offered the unusual concession of permitting a number of non-union teachers to continue working as long as they pay their dues, but the trustees have been digging themselves deeper into their anti-union trench with every passing day.

As fellow workers we should go out of our way to phone our local teachers' association and offer at least moral support. As residents and parents we should be making our feelings very clear to our local boards. If ever there was a time to express solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the school system, this is it.

Graham Dowden

Letters to the Editor . . .

To the editor:

I propose we either eliminate union meetings, and conduct our business entirely by referendum, or eliminate proxy voting.

I went to the last union meeting having made my mind up about some of the key issues, but ready to hear what other people might say. I learned some important things at the meeting, particularly about staff working conditions and wages, that changed my mind about what the negotiating priorities should be. This, of course, is why meetings are useful -- they permit us to share information and make decisions based on a knowledge of all the relevant information.

I was surrounded, however, by "ghost" votes -- people holding fistfuls of proxy slips. The only vote taken in the meeting was won by a margin consisting of proxy votes. In other words, the decision was made by people who couldn't be bothered to come to the meeting and listen to the information available there. This seems to me to indicate the grossest disrespect for democratic process. Do people who sent proxies even know what they voted for? Why should any of us bother to go to union meetings?

Cheryl Dahl

[Ed. note: there were 74 members in attendance, and 55 proxy slips.]

BIZARRO



FSA President's Report . . .

Nothing is forthcoming from the president this month except a kidney stone, which, it is hoped, by the time of the Newsletter's publication, will have come forth via the least complicated route.

The whole College doubtless wishes Kevin a speedy recovery, and admonishes him to identify somewhat less imaginatively with Premier Vander Zalm in future.

[Ed. note]

From the First Vice-President . . .

One of the primary duties of the First Vice-President is to attend the CAC meetings and deduce how the reports and policies may impact upon the FSA membership.

The Ministry is planning to stabilize the educational economic climate. A three-year cycle of budgeting and planning has been proposed which will eliminate the college system bouncing from budget year to budget year, the legacy of the restraint era. Within a more stable budgeting environment Management and FSA could then enter into serious joint planning for the future with fewer variables to contend with. Such a budgeting environment would enable individual departments to participate in meaningful, realistic planning. Cross your fingers on this one.

Secondly, the Ministry is examining its role in post-secondary education. A report delineating the Ministry's role

within the post-secondary education system will be published within its Five-Year Plan for the post-secondary system. This initiative is timely in that B.C. Colleges are expected to reach the national average in enrollment within three years (1993). This will undoubtedly mean unabated pressure to expand our services and facilities.

Cooperation with SFU in mounting third-year courses was discussed. Reception is generally very cautious due in part to past experience and a feeling that we should look at expanding second-year UT courses first. However, it is recognized that this opportunity should not be allowed to slip through our fingers. Given the public pressures for higher educational opportunity, our college will mature into a four-year degree-granting institution within 15 to 20 years.

Talking about more pressure on enrollment, SFU will be streaming students using GPA as a determinant. It doesn't take a crystal ball to see that FVC will be dealing with many more low GPA students who are diamonds in the rough awaiting polishing in our programs. (Contrary to placing less emphasis on College Prep, as one highly placed administrator suggested recently, we will need to search for ways to implement more remedial programs in the immediate future.) In addition, some school districts, due to funding restrictions, are unable to offer grade 12 students a full range of programs necessary to meet entrance requirements at the University level and will increasingly look to local colleges for these programs.

The CAC's Open Door Policy Sub-Committee is composed of Doug Hudson, Sybille Stegmuehler, Garnet Brown and Bill Cooke. They have been examining access in other colleges. A review of college calendars vis-a-vis FVC's admission policies shows FVC to be comparable to other institutions. Sub-Committee Chairperson Doug Hudson invites your input and concerns regarding the Open Door Policy and its ramifications. Please send your replies directly to Doug.

A new admission policy which received second reading requires a student who has missed two

consecutive full terms (i.e. Winter and Fall) to apply for re-admission as a new student.

The Student Society brought forward a request at CAC to increase their budget, primarily to enable them to have a presence from May to September. As CAC is concerned with policy development and review but does not play a role in financial policy and issues, the CAC declined to recommend a percentage increase in student activity fees. The Student Society was re-directed to the Board with the CAC appending a request for favorable review by the Board.

It was apparent that the students could benefit from an advisor/advocate to assist them in accessing the system at the appropriate level and guidance in processing their proposals. I recommend a member of the FSA executive assume this role.

It should be stressed that CAC is in the midst of a major policy review and that policies may be brought forward by any employee for review. This is your opportunity to access the democratic process and tinker with the administration of the College. (Doesn't that send shivers up and down your spine!) Please forward your requests to Barbara Moon, CAC Chairperson.

Tom Davis

From the Contract Chair . . .

The recent general meeting more than lived up to expectations that members would represent themselves in a forceful and assertive manner. Your comments were summarized by myself as well as the Association Secretary, who has referred the specific motion to the negotiating team.

I expect that members will continue to meet, perhaps separately, to consider methods of allocation or other concerns

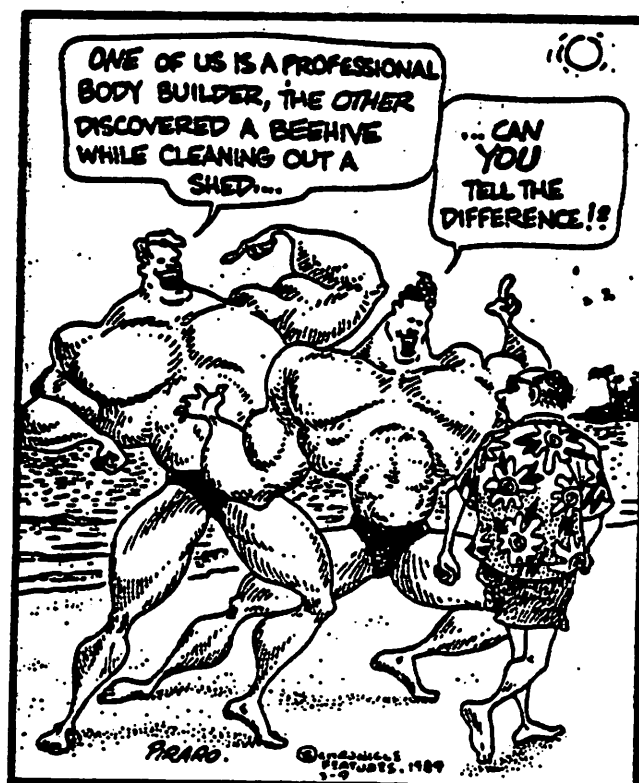
specific to their components. Do record your positions and refer them to me.

Lastly, I was impressed with the turnout, especially considering the chilly weather. The direction you provide makes it all pretty clear to the negotiating team.

Thanks,

Bob Smith

BIZARRO



From the Grievance Chair . . .

Now that the FSA Executive has resolved to proceed to arbitration in the case, it seems appropriate to bring the main elements of a major ongoing grievance to the Association's members.

The case originated in a selection advisory process conducted in May/June 1988, in which the committee (consisting of two FSA representatives and two from management) recommended an external applicant over two qualified internal candidates. On behalf of the Association, I filed a written grievance, citing violations of articles 4.2(c), 4.2(d), 4.2(f), 13.3 and 14.4 of our contract with FVC. To generalize on these provisions, one might say they express the college's commitment to promoting internal candidates who qualify for advertised positions and to conducting a fair selection process that shows respect for such applicants' previous service to the college.

As a remedy, I asked that the hiring process be repeated, with the rights of FSA members kept firmly in view. This proposal was rejected by management at every stage of the grievance process. (Members may wish to consult Virginia Cooke's report on the last step of the internal grievance procedure in the Agreements Committee article contained in last month's FSA Newsletter.)

After I had discussed the case at length with two CIEA-affiliated lawyers, the FSA executive decided to proceed to arbitration in the grievance outlined above. The

Association's costs in this hitherto untried extension of the grievance process will be met in part by CIEA, but we must expect to make some financial sacrifice in support of important principles within our Collective Agreement.

A final resolution of the grievance in question will probably require about six months' time. The FSA executive voted unanimously to seek an arbitration hearing, feeling strongly that the Association should make every effort to ensure that its members really do receive the rights and considerations promised them in their Collective Agreement.

* * * * *

The shop stewards' meeting of February 8 was a well-attended and informative event. As an outcome of our round-table discussion, I forwarded to the FSA executive requests that the Association attempt to bring about an improvement in management's questionable policies regarding weather-caused closures at FVC and that FSA members be supplied with the parking places necessary for their punctual arrival at work.

David Reynolds of CIEA joined the meeting to help acquaint our stewards with some of the issues and situations they may face while serving their colleagues in the Association. I will close with my sincere thanks to all who were able to attend.

David Allen